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NEWSBYTES

Deputy SECDEF to leave

Deputy Secretary of Defense John J. Hamre will depart his post March 31 to become president and chief executive officer of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen made the announcement Jan. 10. Secretary Cohen recommended that the president nominate Rudy de Leon to replace Dr. Hamre as deputy secretary of Defense. Mr. De Leon currently serves as under secretary of Defense for personnel and readiness.

Looking for 'Fellows'

Applications are currently being accepted for the White House Fellowship Program. Annually, 11-19 people are selected to work full-time for one year as special assistants to senior executives in cabinet-level agencies or in the executive office of the President.

Completed applications must be returned to the President's commission postmarked not later than Feb. 1. The packages do not need to be forwarded through the Air Force Personnel Center. The president will make the final announcement of White House Fellows June 1. Those selected will begin their tour Sept. 1. For more information, contact the local military personnel flight or call Tech. Sgt. Jackey Gates at DSN 665-2103 or visit www.whitehousefellows.gov/.

Jumper to command ACC

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Gen. John P. Jumper hands over the reins of U.S. Air Forces in Europe Jan. 13 after two years of running a command that supports U.S. military operations in 83 countries.

He moves on to take charge of Air Combat Command, at Langley Air Force Base, Va. Succeeding General Jumper is Gen. Gregory S. Martin, former principal deputy, assistant secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition.

Basic housing allowance

■ SECDEF announces plan to increase BAH

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen announced Jan. 6 plans to eliminate service members' out-of-pocket expenses for off-base housing in the United States by 2005.

The Department of Defense initiative is designed to reduce the average 18.8 percent out-of-pocket monthly housing costs this year to 15 percent in 2001, with continued reductions each year eliminating those costs entirely by 2005.

"This historic boost to the [Basic Allowance for Housing] is another confirmation of the department's vigorous and sustained commitment to the quality of life of our men and women in uniform," said Secretary Cohen. "It adds to the



DOD Photo by Helene Stikkel
Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, [seen here visiting troops in Saudi Arabia], recently announced his proposal to eliminate out-of-pocket BAH expenses by 2005.

momentum generated by the landmark improvements to military pay and retirement enacted by Congress ... and it augments our

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Air Force evades flu epidemic

■ Health officials credit vaccination campaign

By Senior Airman A.J. Bosker
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON — The Air Force has evaded the flu outbreak sweeping the nation thanks to its vaccination campaign, according to service health officials.

The Air Force community is experiencing an average year in terms of flu cases. Only 95 cases have been identified since October. Of these, 53 were active-duty members, said Maj. Janette Goodman, chief, Air Force Global Surveillance, Force Health Protection and Surveillance Branch, Institute for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health Risk

Analysis, Brooks Air Force Base, Texas.

"Of all the cases reported to our office, about half are family members who are not required to receive the vaccination," Major Goodman said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the effectiveness of the flu vaccine in protecting people against illness or serious complications depends primarily on the age and health of the person receiving the vaccination and the similarity between the virus strains in the vaccine and those in circulation. When the match between the vaccine and circulating strains is close, vaccinations prevent illness in approximately 70-90 percent of healthy adults under age 65.

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Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/> Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Why the drop?

Thanks for the pay raise this month, but why drop the BAH rate by almost the same amount of the January raise? I don't understand. Is it a wonder that we can't get good people to stay in the active force or the Guard?

Tech. Sgt. Dave Thomas
Nevada Air National Guard

[Editor's note: According to Air Force officials, the BAH legislation includes a rate protection provision to protect currently assigned members from fluctuating local housing costs. The lowered rates affect members who arrived at their new assignment after Dec. 31, 1999.]

Who's going to be around?

Just read Secretary of Defense William Cohen's plan to increase BAH. Of all the unmitigated gall! As they slip in the 2000 BAH rates, where over half of all Air Force installations now receive less BAH, he now says he's

committed to raising BAH rates by 2005. Sorry, sir. I, for one, am tired of hearing how our leaders are looking out for us. Give us a 4.8 percent taxable pay raise and then decrease our nontaxable allowances. Just when I think I can maybe convince younger troops to reenlist, something like this occurs ... I won't be around in 2005, but here's the real problem: Who will?

Master Sgt. Charles Yockey
Pope AFB, N.C.

Ergometry woes

Now that a new Air Force Surgeon General has been sworn in, maybe the long-overlooked cycle ergometry program will finally be addressed. It's high time the program is credited for what it really accomplishes. It provides great job security for the civilians who run the program on the bases. Tracking all the people who don't meet standards takes a lot of manhours ...

Staff Sgt. George Meeker
Hurlburt Field, Fla.

[Editor's note: The Air Force Medical Operations Agency response is online.]

National defense: not worth dignifying?

By Cynthia Minnick
11th Wing Public Affairs

"I'd rather see this country overrun than see my kids go to war."

So said a woman I've known since childhood. Someone I thought I knew well. After the initial shock of her words I am still baffled, almost a year later, as to how an American can reach such a point of apathy about national defense.

While her statement probably stems from maternal instinct regarding her two children (who are small), I worry this may be a common, though unspoken, sentiment of many Americans. Do others have the "not my kid" mentality? Is individual security more valued than freedom for all? Are people teaching their children the defense of this nation is something beneath consideration?

Maybe I am out of step — a patriotic anachronism. Perhaps my attachment to the military culture and community is reflected in my attitude and belief system. As a child, my values were initially instilled by my parents, both veterans. Yet my friend's father is a veteran, too. It's distressing if this man's contribution to protecting the country went unnoticed in his own home.

If I could turn back the clock to the moment of her frightening statement, this is what I would have told my friend:

Your complacency about national defense is a dangerous habit. Of all the things you lie

awake worrying about, I'll bet your sleep has never been interrupted by the fear rebels will pound down your door and drag you, your husband or your children out of your home.

You, my friend, can raise your two children in a time where fear of invasion only happens to people in distant countries. As your little ones lie dreaming, there are sons and daughters of America stationed all over the world who keep your youngsters safe. Airmen, sailors, soldiers and Marines are prepared to die to defend your liberties and your front door. Because they have volunteered to be vigilant, it allows many Americans to be blissfully unaware of the dangerous place the world can be.

While you may slumber, others have not. In this country's history, there have been countless mothers and wives who spent sleepless nights wondering what happened to their child or husband who never returned from war. In their heartbreak and loneliness, perhaps they found some measure of comfort and pride knowing their loved one disappeared or died so others could come home. This country remains free as a result of veterans' sacrifices. I imagine those women's

faces as you say, "I'd rather see this country overrun than see my kids go to war."

Remember, the children you hold so dear are also America's children. As part of this nation, they are probably some of the best protected and most privileged children on the planet. That privilege comes with a price tag. For all of our faults, societal ills and past mistakes, the United States is still our chosen home. Or is there somewhere else you would rather live? If forced to leave, where would you go?

Not long ago, I watched as a father patiently read and explained to his two young sons the Gettysburg

Address etched in stone at Lincoln's monument in D.C. I wonder if the words made an impression. Did the boys grasp the meaning? Did they appreciate the sacrifice? Did they understand this nation's freedom has a cost, perhaps of their own lives someday? Hopefully, this father will be successful in his lessons on liberty. For America's future, I hope his two children come to understand patriotism, loyalty and the courage to defend. Because for those two children who grow up to understand, I worry there may be two who do not.

"
... I'll bet your sleep has never been interrupted by the fear rebels will pound down your door and drag you, your husband or your children out of your home.



cyberwarfare

U.S. readies for future battlefield

By Senior Airman A.J. Bosker

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – The commander-in-chief of U.S. Space Command said recently the U.S. military is preparing for future conflicts involving cyberwarfare.

USSPACECOM already has invested a lot of resources toward defending military capabilities from cyberattack, said Gen. Richard B. Myers, speaking at a Pentagon press conference Jan. 5.

“We think that the Joint Task Force for Computer Network Defense, which became fully operational this [past] June, has done a good job,” he said.

Anticipating the possibility the Y2K rollover might be used as a cover for attacks on military computer networks, General Myers said USSPACECOM stood ready to respond. “We had plans in place; however, we didn’t see any evidence of (attack) and the activity was absolutely normal during the rollover.”

The command’s cybermission will continue to expand once it stands up its computer network attack mission in October.



The Joint Task Force-Computer Network Defense serves as the DoD focal point for defense of DoD computer networks and systems.

“We are just in the beginnings of drawing up our implementation plans and concepts of operations,” the general said. “It will be some time before we can be more definitive in that particular area. But we think it’s a logical fit with our command structure and what we do on a daily basis, and the fact that we have a global perspective, which is needed for those of those new (defense and attack) missions.”

The goal of these missions is to have the ability to deny, disrupt and degrade enemy systems while protecting U.S. assets from attack, since “we are probably the country that is most dependent on information technology,” General Myers said.

One example of a possible use for computer network attack would be to take out an enemy’s air defense network.

This article is available in its entirety online.

BAH to increase

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ability to attract and retain the quality individuals America’s military needs. Good housing is a top priority for the department and a crucial component of quality of life.”

The initiative further strengthens ongoing efforts to eliminate DOD’s inadequate on-base family housing by 2010 and inadequate dormitories for single members by 2008 through the increased use of privatization as well as traditional military construction.

To pay for the initiative, DOD has realigned more than \$3 billion into the housing allowance program over the next five years, beginning with \$160 million in the FY01 budget.

The Defense Department has a three-pronged integrated plan to improve housing: increasing housing allowances, increasing reliance upon the private sector through privatization, and maintaining military construction.

Housing allowances compensate service members who live off-base, and provide the income stream to support privatization.

Some 750,000 service members in the United States are eligible for BAH and authorized monthly BAH payments up to no more than 85 percent of the average local cost for housing. Service members currently pay for the shortfall out-of-pocket. The FY01 budget will include the necessary proposed legislative changes to allow out-of-pocket costs to be decreased below the currently legislated 15 percent.

Out-of-pocket costs reflect the difference between BAH rates and the national median cost of housing. While housing costs and BAH rates vary by location in the United States, average out-of-pocket costs are the same for the typical member of each military rank at every location in the United States.

For example, a typical married technical sergeant currently has an out-of-pocket cost of \$175 per month, regardless of location, which is 18.8 percent of the \$934 national median housing cost for that rank. This initiative will increase a typical married E-6’s monthly BAH by \$35 in 2001, with additional increases every year thereafter until the E-6’s BAH is \$175 higher than if the initiative had not occurred.

Citizenship process streamlined

By Tech Sgt. R.R. Getsy

Headquarters, United States Air Force

WASHINGTON – New procedures are in place that will drastically reduce the time it takes to process most military citizenship applications, thanks to a plea for help put to the secretary of the Air Force.

The new process, which is effective throughout the Defense Department, was prompted by a question from an airman to Secretary F. Whitten Peters during the secretary’s visit last year to Patrick Air Force Base, Fla.

Senior Airman Alexander Cubas, a native of Honduras, had asked the secretary for his assistance in cutting through the red tape at the Immigration and Naturalization Service. His question led the Air Force to seek improved relations between not only the Air

Force, but between all military services and the INS.

“This is really a case of several government departments working together to find a sensible solution to a serious problem,” said Secretary Peters. “It also shows why it’s so important for people like me to get out in the field and hear from our airmen. Airman Cubas raised a very real and legitimate concern and that prompted action. As a result, thousands of people will benefit.”

“Non-citizen Air Force members are barred from re-enlisting, holding a security clearance, and are limited in overseas assignments and deployments,” said Maj. Scott Porter, Air Staff project officer.

This article is available in its entirety online.



Recruiting & retention

■ AF official addresses top people issues

By Cynthia Minnick

11th Wing Public Affairs

BOLLINGAIR FORCE BASE, D.C. (AFPN)—The

best part of her job is being out among people, said Maj. Gen. Susan L. Pamerleau, and she had the opportunity to do just that as guest speaker for the 11th Wing Professional Development Series at the Defense Intelligence Agency here recently.

General Pamerleau, director of personnel force management at the air staff, said the two top personnel issues are recruiting and retention. She cites a booming economy and more college-bound youth as two reasons for the slump in signing up new recruits.

"This is the first time in 20 years that we have missed our recruiting goal," the general said. "The recruiters have worked harder and more productively than ever, but the problem isn't just recruitment — it's retention."



An Air Force recruiter speaks to a prospective applicant. The Air Force is putting increased emphasis on advertising and other programs to meet the challenges in recruiting and retention.

One of the more visible efforts to boost recruiting numbers includes a new advertising campaign beginning in March.

"Up until this year, never in its history has the Air Force paid for television advertising," General Pamerleau said. "But senior leadership made the decision that we need to have a greater impact across the nation."

The advertising will do double duty — targeting

recruiting and highlighting the mission and people of the Air Force at the same time, she said. "It's a way to show people here's what we do, this is a great place to be, and we do important things for our nation and for our world."

Although senior leadership wanted to boost the numbers of recruits, they did not want to let the quality of the force suffer, General Pamerleau said.

This article is available in its entirety online.

AF evades flu epidemic

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The vaccine available to the Air Force this year was made with a component of the influenza type A strain — the most common strain among flu victims being reported nationwide, Major Goodman said.

"All but one of the 95 cases reported to our office were of influenza type A," she said. "This is good news since the effectiveness of any vaccine greatly improves when it more closely matches the active strain of the virus against which it is designed to protect."

Flu is a major cause of illness and death in the United States and annually leads to approximately 20,000 deaths and over 110,000 hospitalizations, according to CDC statistics.

With these statistics, Major Goodman encourages those who have not yet received the vaccination to do so.

"One common misperception many people have about the flu vaccine is it causes the flu," she said. "This is untrue."

The vaccine used in the United States is made from inactivated or killed influenza viruses, and cannot cause influenza infection and does not cause influenza illness, said the CDC.

"Most bases should still be offering the vaccinations," she said. "If the vaccine is not available, the medical facility can have more delivered or refer patients to a local civilian healthcare facility."

For more information, go to The Centers for Disease Control Flu Season 1999-2000 Q&A at <http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r2k0107.htm>, or the DoD Influenza Surveillance site at <http://pestilence.brooks.af.mil/DoDGEIS/>

New enlisted grades policy benefits ANG members

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) — Promotions from staff sergeant to technical sergeant are quietly celebrated in most Air National Guard circles by one's enlisted peers, commander, and perhaps a few members of the family. The ANG's director and command chief master sergeant rarely make a point of traveling to those ceremonies.

So it was a special occasion indeed that brought Maj. Gen. Paul Weaver Jr., ANG director, and Command Chief Master Sgt. Gary

Broadbent to Maryland's 175th Wing at Martin State Airport, outside Baltimore, Jan. 5.

Staff Sgts. Joseph Casal, James Elliott and Michael Jones were each promoted to technical sergeant during the high-profile ceremony that punctuated the ANG's new pay-grade policy for its 96,000 enlisted people.

The three sergeants are the first to benefit from the new enlisted grades policy giving ANG members a few thousand more higher-ranking and higher-paying positions, and an equitable rank structure.

This article is available in its entirety online.



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